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A R T

O F

PLAYING AT SKITTLES:

OR, THE

Laws of Nine-Pins displayed.

SHEWING

Both the OLD and NEW Methods of forming
General *Goes* and *Tips*, with the Names,
Counts, and Exceptions to each.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

The CHINESE and PERSIAN Manner of
Playing; illustrated with Diagrams, Plans, &c. of
the several Frames and Grounds, both in the Old
and New Forms.

ALSO,

An Address to Publicans, recommending to them to
Adorn their Grounds with every requisite Advantage,
in Order to encourage, as much as possible, this
useful and salutary Game.

By A. JONES, Esq.

In Reason's Eye, the World's a Skittle Ground,
In which Mankind will tott'ring Pins be found:
The Bowl is Fortune, to be up who will,
It knocks them down by Hazard or by Skill.

L O N D O N:

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MDCCLXXIII.

[Price One Shilling.]



THE

P R E F A C E.

TO PUBLICANS, &c.

BEING brought up in my childhood in one of the most uncultivated parts of England, and since having had the opportunity of tasting the difference between that and the *finest or best polished* place, not only of this, but of most kingdoms in the known world; and that progressively, in the course of which I turned my mind, when tired from other observations and studies, to recreations of the soul, but found that I grew more tired with some than others; then I made observations on myself which I tired with soonest, and in general found, that after study, a game of exercise gave the

greatest and longest return to the tired faculties ; and after labour, games of ease were best. At last I concluded that nature itself is but play, being only supported by action : a smith with his heavy hammer is tired by the continual labour, but when he is resting himself with his arms across, and leaning against the bench or wall, if he was commanded to keep that position for a considerable time, and was to be paid for it accordingly, he would tire as much with standing still as before with hard labour, and be glad to have his hammer again. From this observation it is natural to suppose, that games of relaxation for great towns full of people should be rural and active, and the reverse for people who labour hard. The games should be proportioned to the labour which hath been gone through, and the time intended to be spent that way, or ill consequences may ensue, such as
spending

P R E F A C E.

spending more time than can be spared, or of being tired before the time is expired.

It must be confessed, that for any great body of people it is hardly possible to find any recreation that shall be universal, as their employments are, and must be so various; but it is agreed by all, that those are the most universal recreations, that give exercise to all the faculties at once.

The game or play at Nine-pins, or Skittles as it is commonly called, being the best adapted for a great and commercial city, I have given a full account of the same in all the forms I saw it played at, by all sorts of people, and in all places I travelled through, whether under the name of Skittles, Nine-pins, Bowl+Ally, or any other appellation.

The reader will find here, the true methods of playing the game in old

times, when it required more art than at present, and laid down in as plain language as the nature of the subject will admit, which I wish to have studied for the sake of recreation only, not with a design to meet in order to guzzle and drink. To the credit of those publicans who have skittle-grounds it may be spoken, that one dozen of them prevent more drunkards than all the moral discourses put together. If labouring or confined men be tired with one sort of work, they must have another, and for want of games, they drink without ceasing, while money and understanding will hold out; but a game of recreation prevents that by the time required; and if the plans here laid down were renewed, then the games would be of longer duration, and more practised, which would add much to the recreation of genteel tradesmen, as well as common labourers.

The

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The Publicans, for whom this piece is chiefly intended, ought to do their endeavour to attempt the recovery of the game; this must be done though but by degrees, since it would be cramming a new system down their players throats, and in consequence they would lose the idea of recreation, which must be the thing intended. While they endeavour to make their Grounds, &c. agreeable, for the good of their customers constitutions, &c. &c. then each will be of reciprocal advantage to the other, as well as honour to the game; and also will keep the nation clear of so many quack doctors to prey and eat up the vitals, as well as the money, that remain of the poor emaciated souls, lost for want of air, exercise, &c.

I remain,

The Public

and Publicans

Obedient humble Servant,

A. J.

The Rebellious, for whom this piece
 is chiefly intended, ought to be their
 endeavour to anticipate the recovery of
 the game; this must be done though
 but by degrees, and it would be crani-
 ing a new system toward their players
 threats, and in consequence they would
 lose the idea of recreation, which must
 be the thing intended. While they en-
 deavour to make their grounds, &c.
 agreeable, for the good of their cul-
 turers constitutions, &c. &c. then each
 will be of reciprocal advantage to the
 other, as well as honour to the game;
 and also will keep the nation clear of
 to many quick doctors to prey and eat
 up the vitals, as well as the money,
 that remain of the poor emaciated souls,
 lost for want of air, exercise, &c.

I remain,

The Public

and Publicans,

Obedient humble Servant,

A. J.

OF GAMES IN GENERAL.
THE
ART
OF
PLAYING AT SKITTLES, &c.

OF GAMES IN GENERAL.

FROM the history of the world it may be observed, that as sloth and idleness increase, so do the recreations of the soul; from active and manly exercises of the body, to those of ease and laziness, which pass under the more refined names of *genteel recreations*. If there was no other criterion of a body of people than that of their games or recreations to distinguish their genius by, that would be sufficiently characteristic. The Grecians and Romans, when their youth were brought up with the manly exercises of leaping, jumping, running, wrestling, and other feats of activity, were conquerors over all that opposed them; but when the more genteel

genteel games came in fashion, their youth became similarly effeminate, and more of shadows than men. From this general change in the exercise of youth, comes that progressive arrival at effeminacy in every state; therefore, it certainly must be better for the youth of every nation to be kept to manly exercises, and, as such, ours should follow Running, Leaping, Top-whipping, Marbles, &c. unto the age of ten or twelve; and after that age, the games of Prison-barrs, Foot-ball, Leaping, Skittles, Shuffle-board, with many more of exercise; all which are to be preferred to the genteel, refined, and lazy games of Cards, Dice, Back-gammon, Draughts, &c. &c. all of which were introduced by a luxurious and over-fed age of the people, when their souls were insipid with ease and sloth, and their bodies inactive from being over-fed with beef and plum-pudding, which naturally produce bog-bellies, swelled legs, gouty feet, and other ailments of a loaded corpse, which are as much a disgrace to mention, as they are for a patient to bear. This general change from games of activity to those of ease, is evident

also

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a lot more of hot-man and beat into a

~~breathing a blow from behind a counter-~~ **the** and also the opponents fly from them,

• A Thumb-rope is one made by rolling the hay or straw round the thumb, by moving the right hand, as the rope-makers do their twisting mills.

the ball perfectly round, and by often kicking it at first in water, acquires a perfect hardness, with a little elasticity, which is all that is required for this exercise. But in the most uncultivated parts, (as they are termed) these sort of balls are but to be rarely seen now; for say the old people, *They hurt the toes of our bearns now, because of their tender feet and thin shoes*; and in their stead is used a fort made of horse-hair hard beat into a four parted cover made of shoe-sole leather. These balls seem to have great art in them, as fitting better with the tender feet that is to drive them, but are not to be compared with the former and their players; who are always conquerors when in combat with the latter and their ball. However, either fort are better than the last refinement, for with those no trivial obstacle will advantage the combatants by the rebound of the ball, such as the wind, hedges, slender trees, and the like. I have seen round holes made through a bush, or thickset hedge, by those balls, and also the opponents fly from them, dreading a blow from so hard a composition.

But

But according to the latest improvements, the balls are made of bladders, and in consequence, are fit for the effeminate, fine, gentle, and *learned youth* of this age, to play in chambers with, or at the fire-side; not unlike a Liliputian in an egg-shell.

What has been particularized upon the manlike exercises of Foot-ball playing, might likewise be done upon several other sorts of rural sports, in their degeneracy from their design of exercise, to that of ease, such as leaping upon a horse instead of on the foot, and down inclined plains instead of level ground, because the body will tumble down of itself; in Trap-ball, in hitting the ball with a flat board or round club, instead of a sharp-edged one; and, lastly, in the manly exercise of Skittle-playing, which I shall next particularize, and shew the great advantage to youth of all stations in life, especially in its original rural form.

OF SKITTLE PLAYING.

IT has been allowed in all ages, by all the learned, that the bringing up of youth to a sprightly and a lively imagination, or at least to assist them for it, has been much forwarded by the games that they used in their recreations, and which have been mostly those that give a general action to all the parts of the body, from which the circulation will be more general through all the blood-vessels.

For those recreations in their youth, Top-whipping, or Setting, is allowed by the most sensible part of mankind to be the most proper exercise. Playing at Marbles is near of kin, but wants several positions of the body with the former, and what is worse, that agility and sprightliness of spirit required in it. In the state of manhood we have no game so similar, except that of Skittles, for in this there is much stooping, skipping, hitting marks, and (in the old games) catching with the

SKITTLE PLAYING. 15

the hands, which naturally exercise all the faculties at once; and as there is a vacancy for replacing the game, or setting up the pins, the time will be sufficient to refresh the body in all its parts of exercise.

But what has been observed upon the decline of games in general from their modes of activity, to those of a more genteel or easy method of performance, may be applied here; for the modern game of Skittles has no comparison with its original, or, as it is called in some places, Nine-pins; and the old method of playing is in a manner intirely forgot, I suppose from its being too laborious, to this genteel and fine polished age.

The old method has a great deal of art, activity, and science in it, though the players or constructors might have no view in forming it but from mere chance *at first*, which is the case in all rural sports whatever.

Their pins were nine as at present, but of different values or count, in proportion to

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their height and place in the frame; the pin which stands in the middle, has a head upon it in the form of a hat crown, with the lower part like the modern ones, but the whole pin, composed of the body and head, is higher than any of the others by the head. This pin was generally called King, or some other cant phrase to the same sense, such as His Majesty, Pin Royal. It counted for five.

The next in height and value, were the four corner pins, which were similar to the King, with a head, and about three inches lower than him, and about as much higher than the other four, which stood in a line with them; these were called Dukes, Lords, Nobles, or by any cant names to the same meaning. These four counted for three each when tipped by the King, or his consequents, but if by the bowl or any other from it, either of their own height or lower, they only counted for two each.

The remaining four were called Common, or Commons, and counted for two each when tipped by the King, but by any other
only

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only one each. All tips or knock-downs in consequence of other pins rolling from those that knock'd them down, the same as in the common game now played.

The frame was not in the form now used, but the present seems to be the remains of it; for in the old game there was a square frame round the square of the pins, which is now called the frame. This will be best represented by a diagram which was not unlike the figure in page 24, in which that part represented by the square figure A B C D, was the frame, and the other was only called the square of the pins, which now is called the frame.

In this figure, the King, Lords, and Commons, are evident from their several distinct marks of black, shaded, and white, which must be used for the sake of determining the several games to come.

The distance of the pins and in-frame were fixed in a just proportion from the out-

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frame and each other to agree with the height of the pins, though done by mere chance or experience. I found, upon measuring of several frames, that they kept an exact mathematical proportion, so as to form the properties of the parabola, or in plain words, that the spaces from pin to pin and the out-frame were those which the bowl would describe, with a force equal to its weight, in falling from the height of the pins.

The frames are fixed upon perfect plains, and the bowl has no bias in it; all the different tips are acquired by the out-frame, which is composed of four different pieces of hard wood, though some have them of hard smooth stones when they can be easily come at.

The breadths of the sides of these frames were in general about six inches, and inclined on their out-surface about half a right angle, or forty-five degrees at the most, but all the sides were not alike; that from their different inclinations, the bowl might be made to hit
a higher

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a higher or lower pin in proportion; this is for the advantage of the players, that they may take any advantageous pin that offers from the inclination of the sides.

The great art of this game is in hitting the out-frame so that the bowl may be made to hit any intended pin, which is come at by the position of the body or hand to the frame, and great experience. The bowl running against the middle of the frame in a right line, and at right angles to the same, will rise in proportion to the force and resistance of the out-frame, and by inclining the line of direction, or making a less angle with the frame, the bowl will have a contrary direction among the pins, so that it may be made to hit the corner pins or those in a right line with it, and either in a direct or oblique direction, so as to hit any favourite pin at pleasure.

The bowl and tip in this game are near alike, for the same number may be got in both; the King-pin is made heavier than
2 any

26 SKITTLE PLAYING.

any of the other by near one half, and the bowl as heavy as the King very near, or as about the numbers 8 to 9. These are the first general principles of this old game.

The particulars must be varied according to the general laws of the probability of winning to those of losing; which must be a mean of the sum of the greatest and least go; and also their particular exceptions of hits or misses, so as to form what may be called a lawful go. With those that I have practised with, the law of a fair go is, to hit the frame at the going in, and not to touch it within, or hit, as it is called; and also to take up or put out of the way useless or dead pins. The greatest go that can be had (as will be found farther on) is 40, or 20 at the bowl and the same at the rip; the least go must be 1, so the mean is 20, therefore the guift law must be 6, for the first within the power of the frame, and the game must be 61.

As

SKITTLE PLAYING. 21

As to particular exceptions or variations, they may have been according to the choice of the several players; but from what I have observed, where any remains are to be found of this old, and noble game, that its laws have been always the same, or nearly so.

I once saw a curious piece of antiquity, shewing the original law of this game, which was a frame made of oak, with the general rules to be observed cut upon it, and which was just legible. Upon the taking down of an old hall near Ribchester, in Lancashire, in part of it there was a window of twelve feet square, the frame of which had been a skittle-frame, from the evident marks found upon it, giving the laws of the game: each side of the frame was nine inches broad, with inclinations of 50, 60, 70, and 80 degrees respectively: upon the upper edges of the frame were 61 holes, in two rows, one of which had a blank of 6 after 40, with these lines round the frame:

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"Bowl strong, hit the frame without, and miss the same within;

"The King, two Lords, with their attendants, the game will bring."

A. D. 1486.

From this inscription, it is certain of what great antiquity the game must be; and how much of it remains now is evident, since we have little more than the shadow left.

Also from the above description it must be plain, that the bowl was to hit the King and two Lords, with whom, and their attending rowls, the game would be won. But this must mean the principal bowls and tips, or goes. To confirm which, I observed in the aforesaid frame, that it was guttered in the middle of each side, and about two feet from each corner, by the hitting of the bowl against the frame; but more at the corners than in the several middles; which made me conclude from these marks, and what I have experienced myself, that the best players always attempted their goes in diagonals of the frame, or from corner to corner, but rather

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rather with an oblique motion, that the force of resistance given by the King, returned the bowl upon the right-hand Lord, in consequence of which, the whole frame was cleared. This would not be possible, unless the King was heavy enough to be equal to the remaining force of the bowl.

Now we arrive at the real practice of the game, it may be observed from the nature of it, that the bowls and tips will have different names; such as, the Royal Tip, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, &c. &c. Noble Tip, two, three, four, &c. and all the rest common.

For the ease of the reader, the following figure is referred to when wanted.

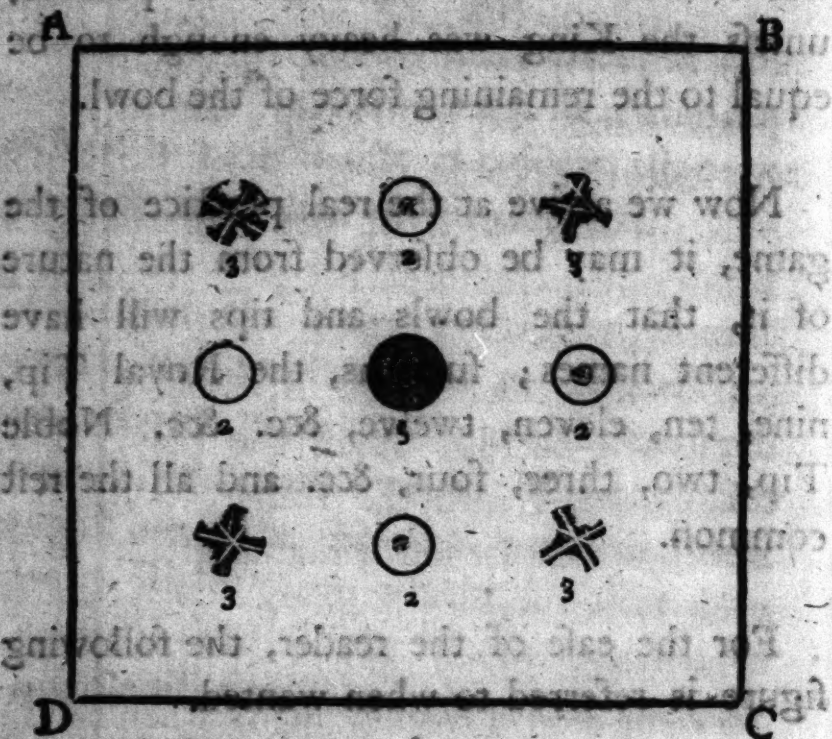
From this figure, and what has been said
before upon the general principles of
the game, may be formed the intent of the
first go. It must be noted, that the player
is bound to strike particular distance with
the bowl, not to any corner or side of the
frame.

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I will now begin with the Grand go.

The first, or Grand go.

Fig. 1.



From this figure, and what has been delivered before upon the general principles of the game, may be formed the intent of the first go. It must be noted, that the player is not bound to any particular distance with the bowl, nor to any corner or side of the frame,

SKITTLE PLAYING. 25

frame; but is at liberty to chuse the side and distance he thinks he can raise the curve to bring the most at his go. Having chose his distance, side, (we will suppose D C) and angle required, which should first be well experienced, then he will begin to hit the Noble at D, from whence the bowl will pass to the King, and from thence will be reflected back to the Noble at C, when being spent, will move towards B, and most likely will bring down Common B C, or Noble at B.

But if it hits Noble B, most likely the game will be lost, unless the player immediately leaps into the frame to catch the bowl, which is always attempted, to prevent it hitting, rubbing, or touching, as it is most commonly called. This I have seen done by active young men, when the bowl has had too great a force, and would have drove the pegs out of the frame that the count was kept by. It is from the several heights, weights, as well as bases of the pins, that causes the natural reflection of the bowl. These four are properly the bowl

C

pins,

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pins, and by the law of count come to 2, 5, 2, and 1, the sum of which is 10.

The pins in consequence are evident, for the first Lord will naturally roll in a curve line from D corner to A D 2; the King, by his great power, will overthrow the Common A B, and Lord B, where he will fall, with his head on the inclined plain, which will give him a force to roll up towards A B till he traverses to the Lord at A, if that pin is not beat down by the Common A B.

This will be quite natural to his majesty, for in the return he will take a larger arc, and in consequence will come with a greater force upon both. I have seen the Noble at A, recoil so strong from his majesty, as to bring down the Common at A D, when missed by the bowl pin at D. The last pin in consequence is from the Lord at C, it will be natural to him to roll round upon D C Common.

By

SKITTLE PLAYING. 27

By the laws of count, these pins are 2, 3, 3, from the King; and from the inferiors 1 and 1, which is 2; therefore the whole sum is 10; and of the bowl and tip it must be 20. The principal aim in this bowl or tip is to hit the King, because him and his attendants count so many; therefore little care is taken of the first Noble, as he and his followers come all from the bowl; but to hit the King without moving him round upon his base, so that he may have no attendants, is one of the worst bowls or tips that can be made. He ought to spin round upon his base before he falls at the Common A B, and by that means will bring that pin down, and in his rolls perform the rest as has been explained.

The above, when performed, is the Royal go by reflection; it bears this name not only if 20 is brought, but also if any of the pins are missed, as is often the case; then it is called Royal go, 19, 18, 17, &c. or the goes and tips are mentioned so, as Royal go 6, 8, &c. and Royal tip 7, 8, 6, &c.

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By this distinction being registered, it prevents disputes.

But by reason of the great difficulty of performing the foregoing bowl or tip, it more frequently turns into the next in honour and value; which shall be next explained.

In this go, the bowl hits the Nobles at D and B, and in passing spins the King, which three pins count 2, 5, and 2, or 9. The pins in consequence are A B Common, and A Noble, from the King, for he will roll between them, and bring down A B Common, and fall with his head upon the inclined plain, which will roll to A Noble; from the bowl, D Noble upon A D Common, and by his roll, D C Common, from B Noble B C Common, exclusive of vibrating rolls. The count of this go is, for the King 5, and 4 for the bowl, makes 9; the pins in consequence are 2 from the Noble D, 2 and 3 from the King, and 1 from the Noble B; upon B C Common, or the whole sum,

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sum, is 17 for the go or tip, and the sum of both, or the whole go, is 34.

It is called a go, or tip royal direct, with the numbers that it brings.

There is great dexterity and nimbleness in this go; for the player will be very liable to let the bowl hit the frame from its line of direction, and at the same time must remove the dead pin A B Common out of the way of the King in his way to the Noble at A.

The next go is the Noble by reflection, which shall be next explained.

The art of this go or tip, is to hit the Noble at D, in a line to the King, who will reflect the bowl to the Noble at A, from whence it will roll round to the noble at B, in a curve line. The Noble B may be looked upon as a consequence, because the bowl will roll from A to B, which it seldom does in bowl pins. The consequence pins are A D, A B, and B C, Common, from their

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several Lords D, A, and B, and often the Lord C, with his Common from the King. The count for the whole is from the King, 5, 3, 2; and from the bowl, 1, 1, 2, 1, 2, and 1; or their sum is 8, and the whole go or tip must be 18.

If the King falls only, and has no attendants, the bowl or tip is called, Noble; but if otherwise, it is Noble Royal.

The next go is, of equally great art with any of the former, though of not the same proportionate number; it is called Noble Direct, from the direct Nobles being the bowl pins. The bowl in this go, must be raised to hit one of the Nobles, as at D or C, when it will fly over A D, or B C Common, and will take the opposite Lord (as suppose at B) and may perhaps take the Common B C; all the consequence pins will be A B, and D C Common; but if the bowl should happen to roll from C Lord to B the same, then it will most likely return to the frame, and what it brings is allowed, as an induce-
ment

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ment of hitting on purpose for a miss-go on tip. This is the only go that the bowl is allowed to return into the frame, for it is only played upon the close of the game, and therefore the allowance is as above. The count, without the return of the bowl, is 6 for the two Lords, and 2 in consequence are 8.

The last principal go is called Common Direct; the chief art in this, is to hit the King with great force, that he may roll much about, and have many attendants, or pins in consequence, to raise the game. It is plain, that in this go there are only two bowl pins, D C Common, and the King, for the other Common is mostly missed, from the difficulty in forming the arc. The King by his motion will go between A B Common and B Lord, and will bring down B C, and A B Common in his first roll; also A Lord and A D Common, in his second.

The

The count is, from the bowl 6, and in consequence of the King alone, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2, or 12, and the whole go or tip is 18.

This go seems as advantageous as any, since there may be great numbers got from it; but without great force be given the King, he is of no use but himself; then there will be no more in count than the two bowl pins; and if he be hit over hard, the bowl cannot be catched if it should happen to incline to the frame; therefore this go is never attempted but upon a little number wanted.

All other goes are called Common, as having in them generally more Common pins than any other sort. Though some of them might very properly be called Common by reflection. As it was immaterial what side was chose to illustrate the games, I all along have supposed the side D C the play side, as shewing the different paths best, when compared with one another. But now it must be evident, that any side will do,

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do, or may be taken, since there are the same numbers at each of them, and the same bowls and tips, &c.

Now I will illustrate some of the common goes : but first of the Common by Reflection (as it may be called) though not by that name.

It is plain that from any side the bowl may play from 2, bowl King, and be reflected to 2 or 3 acute or oblique ; in the first the King will roll opposite 3, and right-hand, and opposite 2 ; the whole count of which will be 7 for bowl, 3, 2, and 2, or 9 for the King, the whole of which will be 16, and the whole go 32 ; though this may often miss from the King, who may not roll so many. The bowl for 3 acute will be 8, the whole for the go must be 16.

The bowl for 3 oblique will be 2, 5 and 3, which are 8, as in the acute case ; and the roll from the King will be 5, on the right.

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right, which is 13, and the whole go will be 26.

These are all the principal goes in common; any others may be had at pleasure; such as a 2 from the middle of the frame, by two common or one three in either corner; and by the same three pins, 5 by the King, 6, 7, 8, 9, &c. &c. have been shewn in the other tips aforegoing.

The foregoing is the whole of this game, in all its general and particular goes, for the most general sport; but there is another form, that affords as much diversion as the one explained.

Which is, to move the Nobles into the place of the Commons, and *vice versa*. This game is much easier, as the King will always be among the Nobles, and the *in consequence* pins will be more numerous and best at the beginning of a game, as following from him alone; but the tips have the same names, and

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and are of the same number, as well Royal, Noble, as Common.

Though the frame for the game be placed upon level ground, yet the space between the two frames was banked round with earth, or some of the best hard boards laid like an inclined plain all round, which makes the bowl and pins to have a natural roll, the former of which was prevented from hitting, and the latter made to have a natural tendency to roll, so that the pins in consequence were often more than was expected, and also made many chance bowls and tips be equal to the best concerted and executed fort, which gave an indifferent player a greater chance for a single game or two.

From this plain and full explanation of the original of this old game, and what it is now, may be noticed, as I said, the degeneracy of this age, and what a pitiful pattern we have of it, a form that has neither genius nor art in it, at least as it is generally practised, though it plainly shews its
3 descending

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descending from the old form aforegoing. For the ground is generally banked round, to cause a rolling of the bowl and pins; but the art, for the several degrees of bowls and tips, seems entirely lost; and, in general, if two moderate players begin, the chance of the game rests upon which gets the go, and that is obtained by the toss of a halfpenny, so the game in consequence is reduced to the same.

It is not possible for any body of people to leave an old custom off all at once; but when a general plan of improvement is laid down, it may be followed by degrees when clearly understood; and as such, our modern game of skittles may be improved by the foregoing old plan.

First, for the players to be allowed a triangular piece of wood, so that it might be shifted to any part of the frame, by bowling and tipping against it, the bowl would rise, and would form several of the bowls and tips as laid down before in the old

SKITTLE PLAYING. 37

old game, but in particular the direct ones, if the pins were made one higher than another, the reflected tips would also be come at without more trouble; and if they were also made of different weights, we should be nearer the old principle, truth, and plan.

Thus to bowl with the pins so altered, and with the triangular block to imitate the Royal by reflection;—The three diagonal pins would be certain if no reflection happened, which would have two chances;—if in the middle pin, then the bowl reflected would be certain of two to the right, if not more, and the middle pin could not miss the opposite corner, besides its rolls, which by all the laws of this game, there would be a certainty of two, therefore the whole bowl would make seven. It must be now admitted, that the tip would, by common reason, be eight, if not the whole nine, therefore the general go would be fifteen, which is little less than one and a half of what is commonly got.

D

Any

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Any single tip to make up the game would be come at in a most certain manner, as this would be obtained by barely shifting the block, so that the bowl would not knock down more than what is wanted; therefore it behoves the players of this game to get master of this great and last improvement, both for the exercise of their several faculties, and also to cause their games to be of greater recreation.

If we now leave all addition to the modern form of playing, but make a philosophical observation upon the methods used in the old game, we shall naturally come into the best goes and tips in the former. In the old game, the pins were of a height to form a regular arch for rising and falling bodies, that if the bowl rose regular to hit the middle pin, thence, in a similar arch, it would naturally do the same in its descent; the weight of the pins caused a natural reflection of the bowl, which often produced uncommon and unexpected goes and tips, but especially the former. The distance of
the

SKITTLE PLAYING. 39

the pins was such, that each might be a consequence from its superior; so that if the King alone was hit, the player might have a good chance to bring the whole frame. The King should, in falling, be of the length that his shoulder in stooping might be above the centre of gravity of his hitting pin, and that pin the same to the next, and so on to the end; but this is determined by their distance, and that best found by the maker, who forms the heights, &c. The frame of the old one, causeth the bowl to rise, by which the arch for the top of the pins was formed.

As the modern game has none of the above advantages, in consequence we are not to expect the tips, &c. from them, but what can be raised by art in imitation of them.

The pins being all of one weight, there can be no go by reflection, therefore all must be direct; as there is no frame, the

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bowl cannot be raised but by the management of the player, &c.

Therefore as our game now stands, with its mode of playing, for the go, the best is for the bowl to rise or hop at going in, and, if possible, to hit the edge of the frame, if the corner pin is missed; but it should be attempted a little above the middle, so that the bowl may have a second hop upon the middle pin, and if so, it is fifty to one but there will be a third, and sometimes (if the bowl be spent) by reflection, which will cause a general fall of the pins, at least there cannot be less than a fall of six, though I have seen more, and even the whole nine; to obtain which, the bowl should be played over knotty ground, if there is any in it. It is usual to go strait through, and in general to bring only at a mean two or three, and these often with a hit or rub.

The tips are easy, and are only a consequence of the old go or tips direct; but
as

SKITTLE PLAYING. 47

as the player can chuse the ground, he gives his hand a reflected twist, and by that means takes all the pins down he intends. All the art is the designed pins, and hitting with force. But if the bowl could be made to have a natural undulated motion, and not be so strong, also that the pins might be hit nearer the top, or at least above the centre of gravity of their falling; then the tips would be more certain of number when wanted.

Of the CHINESE Game.

IT is imagined by many who pretend to the principles of virtue and sobriety, that the game of skittles is the produce of beer-houses, and, in consequence, think it an inducement to idleness, and instead thereof advise inactive games, such as cards, dice, draughts, &c.

But we find that some of the most sensible nations in the world have the same game in use, as the Chinese and Persians; though it must be allowed, that these have in a great

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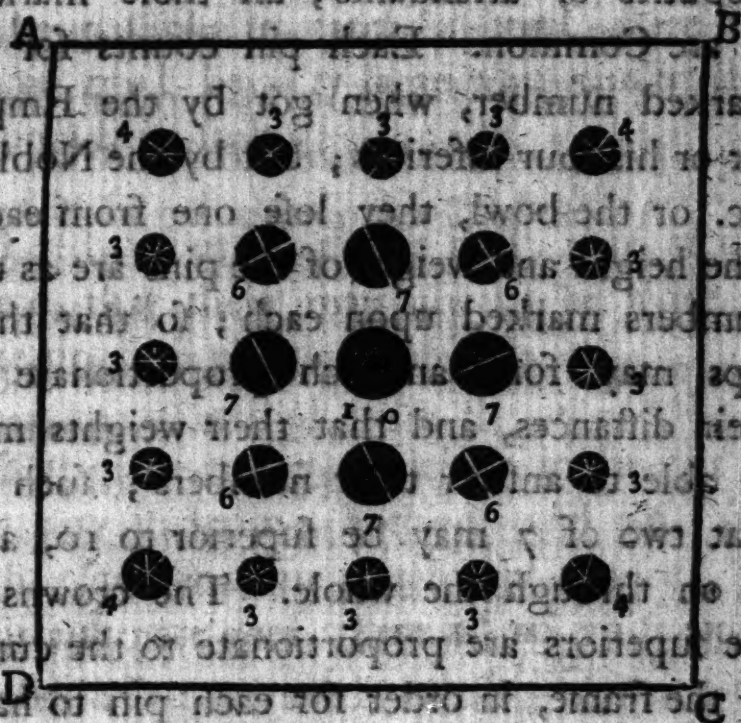
measure (through ease and false delicacy) lost the original intention, which was undoubtedly for the exercise of youth.

The Chinese plan is to have twenty-five pins, which makes the next odd square above nine. As far as I can gather from history, they had the same use of the frame as before laid down, and differed only in the number of pins and the plain upon which they stood, which formed a perfect frustrum of a concave sphere of a particular radius or curvature, in proportion to the Kings (for they had five of them, though of different count) and their height, as well as the size of the heads. To form the construction of all the parts with precision, would require no less than a mathematical calculation. But a general plan, with an explanation, may suffice here *.

* The reader is to take notice, that the annexed plan, as well as that which follows, have not their proportionate distances, for want of room; but he may have a proper idea how to form each from the plan of the common one, or Fig. 1.

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The Plan, Fig. 2.



From this diagram it is plain, that our form of the game is only a contraction of it; which will appear when the nature of this is a little explained. The pin marked 10, for which it counts, is the King or Emperor; the four crossed ones, marked 7 each, are so many petty Kings or Deputies; the four marked 6, are Nobles,

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Nobles, as before in our game; and the four marked 4 at each corner, are their Deputies or attendants; all those marked 3, are Common. Each pin counts for its marked number, when got by the Emperor or his four inferiors; but by the Nobles, &c. or the bowl, they lose one from each. The height and weight of the pins are as the numbers marked upon each; so that their tops may form an arch proportionate to their distances, and that their weights may be able to answer their numbers; such as that two of 7 may be superior to 10, and so on through the whole. The crowns of the superiors are proportionate to the curve of the frame, in order for each pin to have a natural tendency to vibrate from one side of the frame to the other, and yet to shift their centres. The weight of the bowl is eight parts of the middle pin 10.

The outs of this game are not so many as ours; for all that is required is for the bowl to hit the outside of the frame, and when out of the pins, not to return, whether

SKITTLE PLAYING. 45

ther it hits the frame or not; in going out it is no matter, since the form is constructed for this purpose chiefly; nor indeed would it be possible to catch a bowl, since the frame must be very large when constructed upon a little scale.

Lastly, four on a side must play at this game, that there may always be three to take up dead pins.

The game is 457, which is to be got at one go, including both go and tip. As each player has an equal fair chance, by their alternate goes, there is no guift bowl in it.

Though it may seem as if the game would be certain to one party, yet the art consists in not coming too near, but that it will come in by some certain tip which offers, and though each party may be 1, 2, 3, &c. before, the same may lose, as thinking to bring them to a tip within reach, yet not one in a thousand may be able to get it.

and

and

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and it often may happen that neither side arrive at the game, but both begin a new: these are called blank games, which if they happen to 13, without ever having one proper, the preference is always given to the majority in that number that came the nearest to one proper.

To shew the similarity between our game and this, I gave the pins similar names; but the Chinese call them by the several names of Tong-hu, Tsi-shu, Pela-shu, Tye-li-mu, and Nang-mu, because of the similarity of the pins when standing to a wood; which names may, with great propriety, be modified to suit us into this order and abbreviations, viz. Tong-u, Ty-u, Tif-u, Pel-u, Hang-u; which names have a near affinity to, I command you, I tye you, I tease you, I compel you, and I hang you. The very language from Emperors to Kings, from Kings to Lords, from Lords to attendants, and their attendants to the commons, who have the hanging or cutting off of all the former's heads; which names, when abbreviated

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viated again, will naturally be only the first words of each name, or perhaps shorter.

These names being known, then any particular bowl or tip will have a name also, by which means each may be registered, to prevent disputes in the game. This being premised, I shall begin with the tips.

The first go or tip is Tong-u Royal, and is no more than hitting him with the force and art to roll round his base, and fall upon his four inferiors, 7 each, in his roll, who will each have a similar motion, and fall upon their inferiors; in like manner the next will do the same to theirs, down to the lowest, and all will come down, which will be in consequence of Tong-u; therefore the count will be 114.

The second is Tong-u by reflection, which must be made from the side D C, by the bowl pins 4, 6, 10, direct, and the reflected ones 6, in a line with C, and between two 3's towards B, when the bowl will roll
and

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and carry off 4, at B corner. The consequence pins, by following the bowl, are 4 at D corner, upon the first 3 to the left, and both of them upon the next. The next bowl-pin, 6, with the assistance of those already down from 4, will overthrow the 7 to the left; and he by his power will overthrow the pin 6 towards A, who by the assistance of his superior, will bring down all that corner. Then Tong-u, 10, will overthrow opposite 7, and by his resistance will be reflected to 6, and 10 on to B C 7. The consequence pins from C 6 are 4, C, and two 3's on D C, whose power bring down D C 7, who clears that side and corner, if any be left. The consequence from middle 3, B C, is C 3, and lastly from 4 B, two 3's on A B, and perhaps the whole three.

The count from the bowl-pins are 3, 5, 10, 5, 2, 2, 3; that from the in consequence to Tong-u, 7, 6, 7, for himself, and from C 6; 3, 2, 22, 6, 2; from middle 3, B C 2, and from B, 4, 2, 2.

In

SKITTLE PLAYING. 49

In like manner the pins in A D side, &c. are counted. The sum of the whole is 91. This is upon the supposition of the pins following their law from a good player. But it is very frequent for opposite 7 to overthrow A, 6; and, in consequence, they two clear all that corner, which quite changes the game, for instead of 2, 3, 2, 5, they count 3, 4, 3, and 6; besides, if the gatherers are expert, they also cause a great difference, from those that are not; for it often happens that Tong-u will perform near the same of the first Tip, &c. — From the last go may be learned a different way of gaining the first go or royal Tong-u, which it is called by way of pre-eminence, as has been said. The whole art in this go, is to miss all the pins but 10, and he must be hit with a direction between two of his inferiors, with a roll upon his base, as if he was going to fall; by which motion he will begin with opposite 7 (from D C) and proceed round to A 6, upon which he will fall, (if not down from one 7) and thence will roll round and take the remain-

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ing

50 SKITTLE PLAYING.

ing 6's. But upon Tong-u moving his inferiors, they each of them will bring down their inferiors on the four 6's, and these last will each carry the corner D's 4's, which will bring all the Commons by their rolling to and again. This counts all royal Tong-u, or 114. If the pins which appear certain to be of no use but as dead ones be taken up, upon a fair fall, and Tong-u be fairly hit, this go will be easily mastered.

The next go is one that naturally comes from missing the first, which is to hit some of the pins that were to have been missed, and is generally to hit D 6, by reflection 7, Tong-u 10, 7 B C, 6, and 3 B. The consequence pins are from 7, 7, C 6, two 3's one 4; from D, 6, two 3's, one 7; from Tong-u, 7, A B, two 3's, one 4, and one 6; from 6 B one 3, and one 4; all of which, when counted, will come to (from the bowl) 5, 6, 10, 6, 5, 2, or 34. The consequences to the right are 19, and to the left 45, all of which are 98. This bowl and tip is called Double Direct Tong-u.

The

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The next go is called Direct Tong-u, from its being made from corner to corner, which is a very easy go, though attended with great numbers, as will appear. The bowl is played from any 4, to its opposite; and when the bowl-pins are hit from the sides, they will all move anglewise towards A. But here they must be boldly struck, and the consequences will be, all those on the left, from Tong-u, opposite 7, B C 7, with its consequences, which will bring most of the right-hand side, as may be understood from the other goes.

This bowl or tip is generally from 85 to 90 or 93.

The next and only go as a principal is Tong-u Ty-u direct, which is evident must be made from the sides of the square, with 3, 7, Tong-u, 10, 7, 3. The difficulty of this go is in describing the arch required; for it must be very much curved, in order to hit the two 3's; but if they be missed, it matters little, since they will come down

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by their superiors. The general numbers of this go are from 50 to 70, or 75.

All the others, or inferiors, are evident; that is, such as 2, 3, 4, &c. to 20, which are reckoned as a single and certain number to get, and therefore the game is granted, the same as we do when one is wanted.

Of the PERSIAN Game.

THE Persian game, tho' not of the same ingenuity and contrivance as the former, yet has its beauties; there are only 17 pins here, but to have them five in a row, they are placed in concentric circles, with one pin in the centre, which is called the King or Emperor, as before.

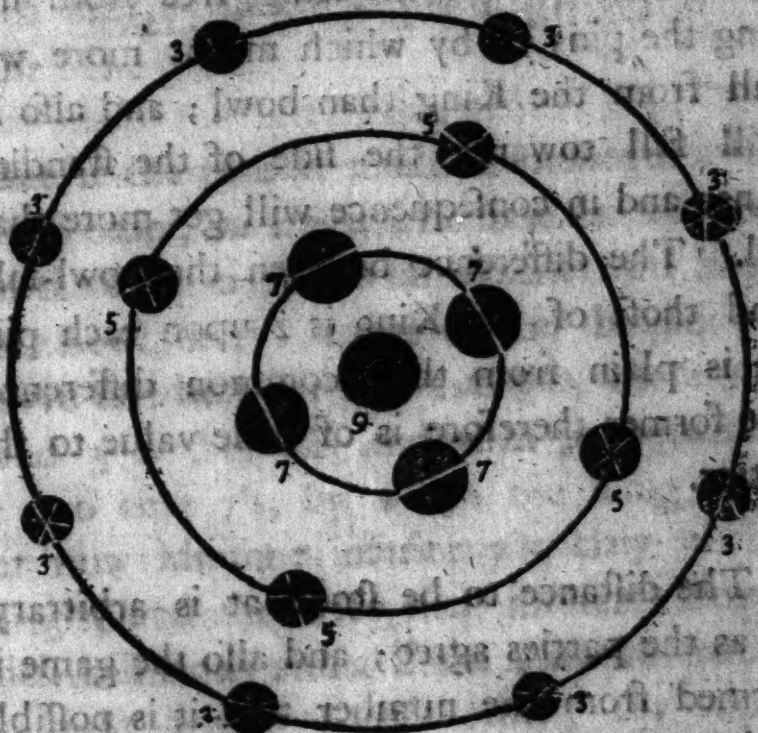
The circles are three in number; in the nearest stand the petty Kings, and so on as in the Chinese scheme before explained.

In this game there is no out-frame, but the base of the in-one is exactly the same, with

SKITTLE PLAYING 53

with the pins of the same proportion, height, weight, and bowl, in proportion to the principal. The numbers of these pins are 9, 7, 5, 3; chose, I suppose, from their being odd, which was one of the Eastern whimsies, with many others that they entertained upon these numbers.

Fig. 3.



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In this game they only bowl, and the bowl has a bias in it, which is played to carry as many of the 3's as possible in the out circle, before it inclines to the inner one of 5's; and also to enter in at the same part opposite, as if the bowl entered at 3 to the right, then it should enter again at 5 in the same radius, that by this similar motion it may enter again between two 7's on the same side, and come at the King free from hitting the pins 7, by which means more will fall from the King than bowl; and also he will fall towards the side of the standing pins, and in consequence will get more than all. The difference between the bowl-falls and those of the King is 2 upon each pin, as is plain from their common difference, the former therefore is of little value to the latter.

The distance to be stood at is arbitrary, or as the parties agree; and also the game is formed from the number that it is possible to be got at a determined number of goes.

Some

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Some play at this game with banked ground, like our common skittle grounds, and others with quite flat, the same as a room floor, or upon a floor itself. I need not be so particular in this game, as it is well understood by many, especially in the northern counties, where it goes under the name of Rouly Pouly, and is played with great art, and variety of different games, which may be called so many different goes in the same game.

But if the pins be made as consequences of each other, as I have also seen them done, then the King ought to be hit first by a hop of the bowl, or by moving among the pins in a curve line between any two 3's, the next 7 and 5 farther off, and turn in between the two next 7's, by which the King will overthrow his four inferior 7's, they their four 5's, and the fives their inferior threes, which will be natural, if the pins be made of a right height to each other; for each five at his fall will bring down its opposite 3, and by its roll the other. A whole go in
this

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this case is 81, which is certain to be obtained, if the bowl hops either over the inferior pins or through them, so as to miss them all, and hit the King near the top or head.

ERRATUM.

Page 48, last line but one, for 22, read 2.



FINIS

